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James Bonta and Tanya Ruge

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

Bill Sedo and Ron Coles

Manitoba Department of Justice: Corrections

**Case Management in  
Manitoba Probation**

**2004-01**

with the assistance of

Kim Smallshaw, Jennifer Ashton, Guy Bourgon

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

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The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada or Manitoba Department of Justice (Corrections).



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## Summary

The majority of offenders in Canada are supervised in the community by probation services. The research literature suggests that supervision is most effective when offender needs are appropriately identified and addressed. Although much has been written on the effectiveness of offender rehabilitation programs, there is relatively little research on how probation officers can influence change in their clients.

In this study, probation officers from the province of Manitoba agreed to audiotape supervision sessions with their probationers. In addition, data was collected from files, interviews and research questionnaires. Analyses of the data focused on how intake offender assessments were related to case management plans and how these plans were implemented in community supervision.

The results showed that the development of intervention plans was based more on what the court mandated than what the offender assessment indicated. As a result, addressing the offender's needs in supervision was not as common as we expected. Probation officers did engage in behaviours that have been associated with positive behavioural change but more could be expected.

In general, the study provides a snapshot of present practices in community supervision and points to areas of improvement. With training and support, probation officers can become more effective agents of change.



## **Case Management in Manitoba Probation**

Research on the treatment of criminal offenders indicates that one of the most effective ways of decreasing criminal behaviour is to intervene at the human service level (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). Moreover, the effectiveness of human services is enhanced when the services are delivered in the community. In 2000/01, 100,526 adult offenders were on probation in Canada, 1,474 were on provincial parole, 9,885 had conditional sentences and 7,581 were under conditional release from federal penitentiaries (Hendrick & Farmer, 2002; Solicitor General Canada, 2002). With respect to young offenders, 48.4% of all Youth Court dispositions resulted in probation. The responsibility for supervision and ensuring the delivery of services to these offenders falls to probation and parole staff. Understanding how community correctional officers exercise this responsibility is a major goal of the research.

### The Present Practice and Knowledge Base

During the past fifteen years, reviews of the offender rehabilitation literature have found that providing services to offenders are associated, on average, with a reduction of ten percentage points in recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Lipsey, 1989; Lösel, 1995; McGuire & Priestly, 1995). Additional analyses of this literature have identified a few of the characteristics that are associated with effective rehabilitation. Three of the more important principles of effective rehabilitation are the principles of Risk, Need and Responsivity (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990).

The Risk principle states that the level of services should be matched to the risk level of the offender. The Need principle states that the targets for intervention should be factors related to offending (often referred to as intermediate targets or criminogenic needs) and the General Responsivity principle states that interventions should be delivered in a manner that is appropriate to the offenders. In general, cognitive-behavioural treatments have been most effective in bringing about change in offenders. When all three principles are in operation, particularly in a community setting, reductions in recidivism of up to 50% have been reported (Andrews & Bonta, 2003).

Case management is the mantra for community corrections. Good case management not only provides accountability in the provision of supervision and services but it is also the major model for supervising offenders safely in the community. Case management requires a proper assessment of the needs of offenders and linking these needs to a service delivery plan (Healey, 1999). The offender rehabilitation literature enhances the case management practices of the 1970s and 1980s by providing the evidential basis for effective case management practice (Rhine, 2002).

According to the offender rehabilitation literature, effective case management should include the following general features:

- 1) an assessment of offender risk in order to match the appropriate levels of supervision to the offender's risk (higher risk offenders receive more supervision and lower risk offenders receive less supervision);
- 2) an assessment of criminogenic needs to define the goals of intervention; and

3) the provision of services that target criminogenic needs.

The probation service in Manitoba has attempted to follow these general features of case management in two important ways. First, all offenders entering community supervision are administered a risk-need assessment instrument. The instrument provides an estimate of an offender's risk to re-offend and also identifies criminogenic needs. Second, probation officers are required to complete an Intervention Plan that is based upon the risk-need assessment. The plan is intended to outline what services are required to address the criminogenic needs of the probationer. Although direct training of staff on cognitive-behavioural methods of intervention is not presently part of the probation officer training curriculum, policy manuals for the province clearly show support for this method of intervention.

The Vision Statement of Manitoba Corrections sets the goal "to have the lowest recidivism ...rate(s) in Canada". In order to reach this goal, offenders must be managed with appropriate degrees of control, supervision and support. In addition, offenders need to be provided with programs and services that reduce their criminal behaviour.

In Manitoba, there are approximately 8,000 adult and youth offenders under community supervision. As part of the intake process in the province, all sentenced offenders are assessed using the Primary Risk Assessment (PRA). The PRA, one version for adults and another for youth, is a general risk-needs classification instrument. Adult offenders convicted of either a sexual, violent or domestic violence offence are also assessed using a Secondary Risk Assessment (SRA) instrument specific to the offence type. There is a SRA for partner assault, one for general assault and another for sexual offenders. Although the PRA has been validated for adults and youth, there has been limited research on the SRA instruments. An earlier attempt to validate the SRA for sexual offenders yielded mixed results and its present use is only as a tool to guide clinical case planning. A separate study is now being conducted to validate the SRA instruments for partner assault and general assault.

The various offender classification instruments used in Manitoba have two important functions. The results from the PRA and SRA provide objective measures that can be used to determine: a) how much supervision is required based on recidivism risk and, b) what areas need to be addressed in order to reduce that risk.

Unfortunately, there is very little research that examines the link between risk-needs assessment and case management. Do probation officers use the assessments in case planning? What do probation officers do in their meetings with probationers? What types of case management strategies reduce re-offending? Answers to these questions are lacking in the literature and yet answers to them are sorely needed to improve supervision practices.

The following study describes and evaluates the process of service delivery within a probation context. More specifically, the research examines the validity and utility of the assessment instruments routinely used in probation, the appropriateness of the treatment targets selected for intervention and the methods of influencing offenders to change. The results from the study are intended to lead to improvements in correctional policy, practice and staff training.

## Method and Procedures

### The General Research Strategy

The research project had two important features. First, cases were monitored over time with assessments conducted at probation intake, at three months and at six months. The assessment data included both routinely administered instruments, such as the PRA and SRA, and five research scales. The multiple assessments over time allowed us to examine how offenders, and the services that they receive, change over time.

The second feature of the study was the behavioural assessment of officer-probationer interactions. Officer-probationer sessions were audio taped at the three different time intervals indicated earlier. The audiotapes were then coded for behavioural influence strategies. A future report will link the behaviours recorded on the audiotapes in this study with offender success and recidivism.

Considerable attention was given to enlisting the cooperation of probation officers in the field to ensure the integrity of the research. A Research Advisory Committee assisted the research team with operational and logistic arrangements for the data monitoring and collection. The senior author presented the research proposal to Area Directors and visited every probation office in the province. Regular progress reports were posted on the government intranet web site and a toll free number was made available to officers and probationers – the research was made as public and transparent as possible. Audio taped instructions for completing the paper-and-pencil questionnaires were available for illiterate offenders and translation services were provided if needed.

### Ensuring Confidentiality

As probationers were asked to complete questionnaires that were not part of the reporting requirements of the probation order, their voluntary participation was requested. Informed consent was obtained from the probationers before administering any research questionnaires. For youth, parents/guardians also completed consent forms. The questionnaires were completed in confidence and returned in sealed envelopes to the research team. Thus, probation staff did not have access to the completed questionnaires.

Likewise, the probation officers themselves were asked to complete a brief questionnaire at the six-month mark and participate in an interview with a research assistant. The questionnaire and interview data was also accessible only to the research staff. Manitoba Corrections officials did not have access to the probationer or probation officer information collected during the project.

### Offender Samples

Both adult and young offenders were targeted in the project. In 2000/01, approximately 6,400 adults and 2,000 youth were under a sentence of probation in Manitoba. In the province, all adult offenders sentenced to supervised probation are administered the PRA and offenders convicted of a general assault or a domestic assault are assessed with the appropriate SRA (the use of the SRA for sexual offenders is used as a clinical planning tool). Approximately 55% of adult offenders are administered at least one of the SRA instruments (40% of offenders are assessed with the partner abuse scale, 10% are given the general assault scale and 5% the sex offender scale). Depending on the offence(s), some offenders may be administered more than one of the SRA instruments. Young offenders sentenced to

supervised probation are administered a PRA Young Offender Version, which is a modification of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (Andrews, Hoge, & Leschied, 2002). The same SRAs administered to adults are administered to youth as required.

At the time of the study, there were 128 probation officers, of which 108 supervised adults and young offenders (20 were intake officers and managers). Outside of Winnipeg, most probation officers supervised all types of cases, including adult and young offenders. However, Winnipeg probation was separated into adult and youth specific units. There were two youth units including a specialized intake unit for young offenders where staff administered the PRA and SRA and completed the Intervention Plan before transferring the case to another probation officer for supervision. The Winnipeg adult probation units were further organized into partner abuse, sexual offenders and general assault offices (such specialization does not exist in the youth offices).

All probation officers were asked to participate in the project. However, only 62 probation officers (57.4 % of supervising officers in the province) actually submitted any cases to the project. It is unclear as to the reasons why so many officers failed to submit cases. Interviews with non-participating officers indicated that the most frequent reasons for not submitting a case were workload demands followed by the refusal of probationers to participate. At the time of the study workload was an issue, particularly in the Winnipeg offices.

Offenders were selected sequentially as they came on to the caseloads of probation officers who had the responsibility for supervising the offender. Officers who conducted only intake assessments obtained consent from the probationers and sometimes asked them to complete the research questionnaires. Intake unit probation officers, all from the Winnipeg area, were not required to audiotape their intake sessions.

Initially, staff from the Winnipeg offices was asked to select the first six consenting adult offenders that came onto their caseload. For probation officers elsewhere in the province, they were asked to select the first four adult and first two young offenders who came onto their caseload. With respect to the specialized young offender unit in Winnipeg, six young offenders were to be sequentially selected.

Soon after the start of the study (January, 2001), field staff expressed concern that six research cases per probation officer was excessive. Consequently, we reduced the case requirement to four per probation officer in February, 2001. Despite a number of efforts to minimize workload demands on probation officers, participation in the project was below our expectations. Intake data collection was originally scheduled to end in July of 2001. However, in order to obtain as much data as possible, the project was extended. Intake data collection ended October 21, 2001 with the six-month re-assessments completed by April 30, 2002.

At the time of the study, the average caseload for probation officers supervising adults in Winnipeg was 99. For officers supervising young offenders, the average caseload was 43. Outside of Winnipeg, the average caseload was 72 (probation officers in rural Manitoba supervise both adults and young offenders). However, there was considerable variation in the different regions of rural Manitoba (from 50 to 90).

## Testing Procedures

In general, data was collected from the following six information sources:

1. The intake risk-needs assessments.
2. Research questionnaires.
3. Audio taping of officer-probationer interviews at three time periods.
4. Six-month re-administration of the risk-need instruments and research questionnaires.
5. Offender files.
6. Probation officer interviews.

A more detailed description of the information collected for the project follows.

1. Intake Risk-Needs Assessment. The Primary Risk Assessment (PRA) instrument is the offender classification instrument used in Manitoba community corrections for profiling the risk and needs of probationers. For adults, the PRA is a modification of the Wisconsin Risk and Needs instrument and the instrument has been validated on probationers in Manitoba (Bonta, Parkinson, Pang, Barkwell, & Wallace-Capretta, 1994). For youth, the PRA is a modification of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (Andrews et al., 2002). There are three Secondary Risk Assessment (SRA) instruments: one for sexual assault, another for partner assault and a general assault instrument. The appropriate SRA (or multiple SRAs) is administered to those offenders who had committed the specific violent crime within the past five years. The items comprising the three SRA instruments were drawn from the general research literature. A recent validation study of the SRA for sexual assault conducted by Solicitor General Canada and Manitoba Justice failed to find predictive validity for the instrument and it is now used as a clinical planning instrument. Validation studies of the other two SRA instruments are presently being conducted.

Policy requires the PRA and SRA (partner assault and general assault) to be administered to all probationers and an Intervention Plan completed within two to three months of receiving the case. However, for the research subjects, probation officers were asked to complete the PRA and SRA within the first month of case assignment. Staff then forwarded copies of the PRA, SRA and the Intervention Plan to the researchers.

2. Research Questionnaires. In addition to the required offender classification assessment and Intervention Plan, a number of different paper-and-pencil questionnaires were administered. Three were measures of specific criminogenic needs, one was specific to domestic violence cases and another assessed the relationship between the probation officer and the offender. Most offenders completed these measures on their own. For illiterate offenders, an audio taped version of the questionnaire to assist them in completing the tests was available. The research questionnaires were administered at the time of the classification interview.

Three research questionnaires were administered at intake and six months later to all the probationers. The first questionnaire, the Pride in Delinquency (PID) scale assessed antisocial attitudes (Simourd, 1997). The PID consists of 10 items asking offenders to rate 10 behaviours (e.g., “getting away from the police after a high speed chase”) on a scale ranging from -10 (very ashamed) to +10 (very proud). Scores on the scale have been shown to predict recidivism among

16 to 18 year old offenders (Shields & Whitehall, 1991) and re-arrest among adult offenders (Simourd & van de Ven, 1999).

The second questionnaire was the Social Support for Crime Scale (SSCS; Andrews, Wormith & Kiessling, 1985). Associating with other criminals is one of the best predictors of recidivism. Almost all offender risk classification instruments, the PRA included, gather information on the offender's involvement with criminal others. The SSCS is a nine item self-report measure of criminal associations originally developed on a probation sample. The scale demonstrated good internal reliability ( $\alpha = .80$ ) but research on its predictive validity is lacking. The SSCS served to augment information derived from the interview-based measure of peer relations (i.e., the PRA).

The third questionnaire assessed feelings of aggression and hostility. The Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) developed by Buss and Perry (1992) is a 29-item scale that measures four factors (anger, hostility, physical aggression and verbal aggression). Scores on the AQ have been found to correlate with peer nominated aggression among college students. In another study, the Anger subscale of the AQ was correlated with assessments of psychopathy but not with violent offences among a sample of federally sentenced inmates (Loza & Loza-Fanous, 1999). However, the measure does appear to have face validity for samples of general assault and partner abuse offenders.

A fourth questionnaire, the Intimate Assault Screening Scale (IASS; Kerry, 2001) was administered only to partner assault offenders. The IASS is a seven-item scale completed by the probation officer. Research with the IASS found scores correlated with other measures of partner abuse (e.g., the Conflict Tactics Scale) and differentiated inmates who had killed their partner from other groups of violent offenders.

These aforementioned questionnaires were re-administered at the six-month period of supervision. In addition, a Relationship Questionnaire was administered but only at the six-month mark. This questionnaire is described under #4. *Measures of Change*.

3. Audiotape Interviews. Audiotape recordings of the officer-offender meetings were conducted on three separate occasions. The first audio taped interview was administered within the second or third week following the intake assessment (i.e., after the Intervention Plan was completed). The second taping occurred three months later and the final taping at six months after the initial audiotape. Upon completion of an interview, the audiotape was forwarded directly to the researchers for coding.

A detailed coding manual for the audiotapes was developed. The coding procedures in this study built upon similar procedures used in the probation studies of Andrews and Kiessling (1980; Ontario) and Trotter (1996, 1999; Australia). The same coding procedures were used for both adult and youth. Additional sections relevant for sex offenders, general assault offenders and partner abusers were coded. Two research assistants were trained in using the manual and periodic inter-rater reliability checks were conducted.

Audiotapes were reviewed in five-minute segments and coded according to five general domains. The first domain was offender needs as defined by the PRA and SRA. The presence or absence of statements concerning the needs identified by the PRA and/or SRA were noted along with other needs not formally assessed by these classification instruments (e.g., health, problems in self-regulation). Problem-solving skills represented the second major area coded from the audiotapes. Problem-solving behaviours that were coded included information gathering, goal setting, the generation of strategies for achieving the goal, selecting a strategy and monitoring the implementation of a plan to reach the goal. The remaining three domains assessed were the use of community resources (e.g., referral to a social service agency), the quality of the relationship between probationer and officer, and the probation officer's use of behavioural techniques to influence change.

The later two domains (relationship and behavioural techniques) are often viewed as the core dimensions in behavioural influence processes (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Dowden & Andrews, in press). A positive interpersonal relationship as evidenced by warmth, openness, enthusiasm, empathy and respect for the client are needed to engage and motivate the client in taking steps to change. Modeling appropriate behaviour, providing opportunities for behavioural practice, reinforcing prosocial activity and discouraging antisocial behaviours provide the concrete direction for change.

4. Measures of Change: Six-Month Re-assessment. In corrections, the reduction of recidivism is a major goal. However, a significant amount of time must pass before recidivism can be assessed. This delay is problematic for correctional agencies that seek more immediate signs of progress. Fortunately, there are indicators of program success other than recidivism that do not require an extended follow-up. These measures of success are referred to as Intermediate Targets (IT) or criminogenic needs (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). ITs are aspects of the offender's situation and circumstance that when changed are linked to recidivism.

ITs can serve as the goals of community supervision and case management. For example, increased prosocial values, the learning of employment skills and controlled drinking are some examples of ITs. The various risk-needs assessment instruments and questionnaires administered at intake measure the state of criminogenic needs prior to intervention. Consequently, we have a baseline assessment of offender needs at the beginning of supervision and an assessment of what offender needs must be addressed in order to promote a more prosocial lifestyle. As a way of measuring progress in addressing the criminogenic needs of the probationers in this study, all of the intake measures were re-administered at the six-month interval. The PRA and SRA were slightly modified to make them more sensitive to change (e.g., "since supervision began"). In addition, the Risk Management Review (RMR) was completed and a copy submitted to the researchers. The RMR is a 10-item form that assesses probationers on their response to treatment, acceptance of responsibility and other factors relevant to supervision. As a matter of policy, the probation officer usually completes the RMR approximately six-months after the start of the probation period.

As noted earlier, an important factor in the supervision and rehabilitation of offenders is the quality of the interpersonal relationship. In addition to coding relationship factors from the

audiotapes, both the probation officer and the offender were asked to complete a 25-item questionnaire that assessed the quality of their relationship and the nature of their interactions over the past six months. This Relationship Questionnaire asks respondents to rate each item (e.g., “I interacted in an enthusiastic manner”) on a five-point scale (“never” to “always”). The questionnaire was developed from “The Shop Supervisor Survey: Inmate version”, a tool used by the Correctional Service of Canada to evaluate inmate satisfaction with their job supervisor. This instrument was further modified using some of the items from a survey used by the Multi-Systemic Therapy program to obtain feedback from families of high-risk delinquents on their therapy sessions (Gendreau & Goggin, 1999a, b). Gendreau and Goggin used this revised questionnaire in a study of community supervision practices in New Brunswick.

5. File Review. A file review provided additional information not captured by the questionnaires and audiotapes. This information was also used to collaborate the results from the other sources of information. Personal demographic and criminal history information were coded as well as information relevant to the supervision of the probationers. The frequency of contact with the probationer and important others (e.g., family, employer) and the use of community resources were recorded. In addition, problems during supervision, including breaches and new offences, were noted.

6. Probation Officer Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of both participating and non-participating probation officers. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone where distances or scheduling did not permit meeting the officer. Probation officers were asked for their views on the usefulness of the PRA and SRA, offender treatment programs, and their attitudes towards offenders in general.

#### Non-participant Comparison Groups

Not all probation officers participated in the research. This raised the possibility that differential participation would affect the generalizability of the results. Thus, it was important to assess whether there were significant differences between the officers and the probationers who participated in the study and those who did not participate. A sample of non-participating probation officers was interviewed (participating probation officers were also interviewed). The interview collected demographic information (e.g., ethnicity, years of experience) as well as their views on the classification instruments (PRA and SRA) and offender rehabilitation. For each non-participating probation officer that was interviewed, a random sample of two cases was drawn from his/her files. These files were coded following the same file coding procedures that were used with the participating probationers but also included information from the PRA and SRA.

## Results

Sixty-two probation officers participated in the study submitting data on as many as 154 offenders. The information submitted, however, varied for a number of reasons. For example, offenders changed their minds about participation part way through the project, failed to report, or were transferred to another probation officer. In order to assess the representativeness of the sample of participating probationers, a file review of 77 randomly selected cases from 42 non-participating probation officers was conducted. This file review yielded information on the social-personal and criminal histories of the non-participating probationers that could be compared to the participating probationers.

Based on the interviews conducted with participating and non-participating probation officers there were no statistically reliable differences in age, years as a probation officer, ethnicity and education level. Probation officers also completed a number of attitudinal measures related to risk assessment and offender rehabilitation. The only difference found was with respect to views of the PRA as a measure that is helpful for supervision. Non-participating probation officers actually had more favourable views than the participating officers ( $t = 2.32$ ,  $df = 61$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### Characteristics of the Research Samples

Personal-demographic information on the participating and non-participating offender samples is presented in Table 1. The majority of the participants were adult offenders and the average age of all participants was 29.6 years (35.7 years for adults and 18.1 years for youth). No statistically significant differences were found between the participating probationers and the non-participating probationers in terms of age and the other personal-demographic variables shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Personal-Demographic Characteristics of the Probationers (n)

Characteristic		Participants	Non-Participants
Offender Status (%):	Adult	65.2 (73)	76.6 (59)
	Youth	34.8 (39)	23.4 (18)
Gender (%):	Male	74.1 (83)	83.1 (64)
	Female	25.9 (29)	16.9 (13)
Aboriginal (%):	Yes	43.3 (42)	32.4 (22)
	No	56.7 (55)	67.6 (46)
Education (%):	less than grade 9	21.0 (22)	28.0 (21)
	Grade 9 or higher	79.0 (83)	72.0 (54)
Employed/Student (%):	Yes	71.6 (78)	69.7 (53)
	No	28.4 (31)	30.3 (23)
Marital Status (%):	Single	68.2 (75)	68.9 (51)
	Married/Common-Law	31.8 (35)	31.1 (23)
Living Arrangement (%):	Alone/Group Home	32.1 (34)	33.3 (24)
	Family	67.9 (72)	66.7 (48)

Note. Numbers vary due to missing data (Participants from 97 – 112; Non-participants from 68 – 77).

Offence and criminal history information for both participating and non-participating probationers are shown in Table 2. Once again, there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups. In addition to a probation disposition, 18.8% of the participating probationers also received a custodial sentence compared to 29.9% of the non-participating probationers ( $\chi^2 = 3.16$ ,  $df = 1$ , ns). The participating probationers, however, averaged shorter probation sentence than the non-participating probationers (18 months vs. 21 months,  $t = 2.81$ ,  $df = 187$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Table 2. Offence and Criminal Histories of the Probationers (n)

Characteristic		Participants	Non-Participants
Most Serious Offence (%):	Person	36.6 (41)	50.6 (39)
	Property	34.8 (39)	24.7 (19)
	Drugs	5.4 (6)	3.9 (3)
	Liquor/Traffic	8.0 (9)	3.9 (3)
	Sexual	9.8 (11)	10.4 (8)
	Other	5.4 (6)	6.5 (5)
Assault History (%):	Yes	31.0 (31)	44.9 (31)
	No	69.0 (69)	55.1 (38)
Prior Incarceration (%):	Yes	37.6 (35)	51.4 (37)
	No	62.4 (58)	48.6 (35)
Prior Probation (%):	Yes	55.8 (53)	66.7 (46)
	No	44.2 (42)	33.3 (23)
Number of Prior Crimes		5.8 (87)	6.2 (71)

Note. Numbers vary due to missing data (Participants from 87 – 112; Non-participants from 69 – 77).

Adult offenders were assessed using the Primary Risk Assessment (PRA) and youth were assessed using the Youth Version of the PRA. For the adult participating and non-participating probationers, there were no statistically significant differences in PRA risk levels and total scores (Table 3). Although for youths the participating probationers were lower in their PRA risk levels ( $\chi^2 = 9.55$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .05$ ), there were no statistically significant differences in average risk scores ( $t = 1.16$ ,  $df = 64$ , ns). Some caution in interpreting this difference is advised as the sample sizes for the youthful offenders, especially the non-participating youths, were small. Based upon the information summarized in Tables 1 through 3, the offenders who did participate in the study appeared to be representative of the general probation population in Manitoba.

Table 3. Risk Levels of the Probationers (n)

Risk Assessment		Participants	Non-Participants
Adults		(n = 86)	(n = 61)
PRA Risk Level (%):	Low	26.7	24.6
	Medium	54.7	45.9
	High	18.6	29.5
Mean PRA Risk Score (SD)		8.1 (3.5)	8.7 (4.2)
Youth		(n = 50)	(n = 16)
PRA Risk Level (%):	Low	56.0 (28)	18.8 (3)
	Medium	32.0 (16)	75.0 (12)
	High	8.0 (4)	6.3 (1)
Mean PRA Risk Score (SD)		23.5 (12.1)	27.3 (8.5)

Upon agreeing to participate, three paper-and-pencil tests were administered to all participating probationers and the Intimate Assault Screening Scale (Kerry, 2001) was administered to 17 partner assault adult offenders. The results are shown in Table 4. In almost all cases, the adult probationers did not differ from the young offenders on the measures given. The one exception was on the Social Support for Crime Scale (SSCS) where the youth scored higher than the adult probationers. Compared to 376 adult probationers in Ontario (mean score of 18.7; Andrews, 1985; Andrews, Wormith & Kiessling, 1985), the adult probationers in Manitoba scored similarly (19.7).

Scores on the Pride in Delinquency (PID) measure were, as expected, lower than those reported for incarcerated federal offenders (mean score of 60.9; Simourd, 1997; Simourd & van de Ven, 1999) and incarcerated youth (mean score of 69.3; Shields, personal communication). For the youth probationers, average scores were only slightly higher than in a sample of university students (39.8; Whitehall, 1993).

The Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) was developed on college students (Buss & Perry, 1992). Compared to college students the probationers scored almost the same and when compared to federal offenders (Loza & Loza-Fanous, 1999), there were no differences on the Anger subscale. This lack of differentiation among diverse samples questions the usefulness of the AQ.

Finally, Kerry (2001; p. 208) reported that the mean score on the Intimate Assault Screening Scale (IASS) for 89 male offenders who murdered their intimates was 3.3. This score was almost identical to the 17 male batterers in this study. However, the small number of male batterers in this study seriously limits our ability to judge the validity of the IASS.

Table 4. Mean Scores on the Paper-and-Pencil Measures for Participating Probationers at Intake

Measure	Adult (n = 95)	Youth (n = 59)	All (n = 154)
Pride in Delinquency (PID)	40.7 (30.6)	43.2 (28.4)	41.7 (29.7)
Social Support for Crime Scale (SSCS)	19.7 (6.1)	22.1 (6.5)*	20.6 (6.3)
Aggression Questionnaire (AQ)			
Total Score	79.5 (19.4)	82.8 (21.3)	80.8 (20.2)
Physical Aggression	24.5 (8.4)	26.3 (7.6)	25.2 (8.1)
Verbal Aggression	15.1 (4.2)	15.4 (4.5)	15.2 (4.3)
Anger	17.2 (5.3)	18.5 (6.2)	17.7 (5.6)
Hostility	22.7 (6.4)	22.7 (7.1)	22.7 (6.6)
Intimate Assault Screening Scale (IASS) (n = 17)	3.2 (1.5)	-	-

\*  $p < .05$  ( $t = 2.31$ ,  $df = 152$ )

Note: Standard deviation in parentheses.

### Case Management and Resource Allocation

The Risk Principle of effective rehabilitation states that the intensity of intervention should be matched to the risk level of the offender, that is, minimal services for low risk offenders and intensive services for high risk offenders. One of the purposes of risk assessments in probation is to guide the amount of supervision that is assigned to a probationer. Thus, we would expect that the frequency of reporting should be proportional to the risk level of the offender.

From the file reviews, we were able to count the number of contacts between the probation officer and both participating and non-participating probationers during the first three months of supervision. On average, during the first three months of probation, clients were seen on 4.3 occasions. The number of contacts ranged from zero (2 cases) to 15 (1 case). Approximately half of the probationers were seen three or four times (47.2%).

The number of contacts was positively related to the risk score as measured by the PRA for adults ( $r = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $n = 133$ ) but not for youth ( $r = .09$ ,  $ns$ ,  $n = 47$ ). However, although the correlation between risk and frequency of contact for adults was statistically significant the relationship was accounted for by the fact that it was high-risk offenders in particular who were seen more often than low and medium risk offenders ( $F = 7.43$ ,  $df = 2, 130$ ,  $p < .001$ ). There were no statistically significant differences between the number of contacts for low risk offenders (seen an average of 4.3 times;  $SD = 2.2$ ) versus medium risk offenders (seen an average of 3.7 times;  $SD = 1.5$ ). High-risk offenders were seen an average of 5.7 times over the first three months of supervision ( $SD = 3.6$ ). Finally, the number of contacts was unrelated to caseloads ( $r = -.01$ ,  $ns$ ; the Winnipeg specialized youth offices were excluded from the analysis where the average caseload for the two offices was 43).

### Formulating a Case Management Plan

The empirical literature on the rehabilitation of offenders makes a distinction between two types of offender needs: criminogenic and noncriminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs are dynamic risk factors that when eliminated or diminished are associated with reductions in recidivism. Most correctional systems in Canada use structured risk-needs assessment to assist staff in identifying the criminogenic needs of offenders that should be addressed in order to manage their risk of re-offending. In Manitoba, the PRA is used for this purpose. Upon completion of the PRA (and SRA in some cases), the probation officer is in a position to integrate this information in his/her supervision of offenders. A summary of needs identified by the PRA is presented in Table 5 (for youth, the PRA does not measure the same needs as for adults).

Table 5. Percentage Participating and Non-Participating Probationers with Needs Identified by the PRA

Need	Adult (n = 147)	Youth (n = 66)
Accommodation	25.2 (37)	59.1 (39)
Employment	40.8 (60)	-
Substance Abuse	36.7 (54)	62.1 (41)
Attitude	55.8 (82)	-
Family/Marital	52.4 (77)	95.5 (63)
Financial	28.6 (42)	-
Emotional	22.4 (33)	57.6 (38)
Peer Problems	47.4 (70)	89.4 (59)
Academic/Vocational	7.5 (11)	84.8 (56)

Note. Youth PRA does not measure same needs as adult PRA.

The Intervention Plan is a one-page form that records the criminogenic needs of the offender (“problems/issues”) and outlines the actions steps to address each of the offender’s problem areas. In addition to boxes for describing the problem and the action plan, the Intervention Plan form includes a box as to whether or not the action plan is mandated by the court. In the project, the Intervention Plan was completed within one month of case assignment. After the risk assessment is completed, the Probation Officer reviews other pertinent file information and meets with the offender to provide feedback from the risk assessment. A plan of action for dealing with the offender’s criminogenic needs is agreed upon and, at this point, the Intervention Plan is completed.

Intervention Plans and matching risk-needs assessments were available for up to 105 participating probationers and 31 non-participating probationers. For many of the variables, some information was missing. Seventy-seven files of non-participating probationers were reviewed but the majority of the files did not contain Intervention Plans. There were no statistically significant differences in what was recorded in the Intervention Plans of participating and non-participating probationers. Therefore, Intervention Plans for as many as 136 probationers (102 adults and 34 youth) are described in this section.

Some of the coding of the intervention plans was relatively straightforward. For example, abstain from alcohol was a common condition mandated by the court and listed in the Intervention Plan (coded as “alcohol assessment and/or counselling”). Other action plans made conceptual sense for grouping purposes (e.g., “no alcohol in home” was coded as part of “alcohol assessment and/or counselling”). Some plans were very specific and too infrequent to report (e.g., three cases required counselling for gambling). A total of 175 needs were identified by the PRA and there were 69 plans that addressed these needs. That is, 39.4% of the needs identified had a corresponding intervention plan. Furthermore, when a criminogenic need was identified for an adult case, the court mandated the vast majority of action plans (Table 6).

Table 6. Intervention Plans for PRA Identified Needs: Adults

Criminogenic Need (N)	% with Need (n)	% Any Plan (n)	Mandated Plan (n)	
			% Yes	% No
Substance Abuse (97)	40.2 (39)	79.5 (31)	90.3 (28)	9.7 (3)
Employment (97)	41.2 (40)	10.0 (4)	25.0 (1)	75.0 (3)
Emotional (91)	23.1 (21)	71.4 (15)	80.0 (12)	20.0 (3)
Family/Marital (97)	52.6 (51)	29.4 (15)	100.0 (15)	0.0 (0)
Accommodation (101)	23.8 (24)	16.6 (4)	50.0 (2)	50.0 (2)

Note. N = Total number of adult probationers. n = number of adult probationers with identified need/intervention plan. For Mandated Plan, percentages represent proportions of any plan.

Substance abuse problems were identified by the PRA for 40.2% of adult probationers and an action plan to address this area was evident in 79.5% of the plans. Counselling plans were found in 71.4% of cases where an emotional difficulty was identified by the PRA. In contrast to the relatively high agreement between identified needs and a corresponding action plan, other needs were not being addressed in the Intervention Plan. Over 40% of the adult offenders had identified difficulties with employment yet only 10% of these cases described an action plan to deal with these difficulties. Similarly over half of the adult probationers indicated family/marital problems but only 29.4% of them had an associated intervention plan and all were mandated by the courts.

For Young Offenders, it was more difficult to categorize action plans due to their uniqueness (e.g., “assist in leaving gang”, “maintain contact with mom”). Thus, relatively few variables could be grouped into broader categories and they are shown in Table 7. In the three problem areas identified with any significant frequency, an action plan for dealing with family dysfunction was the most common.

Table 7. Intervention Plans for Identified Needs: Youth

Criminogenic Need (N)	% with Need (n)	% Any Plan (n)	Mandated Plan (n)	
			% Yes	% No
Substance Abuse (31)	45.2 (14)	64.3 (9)	77.8 (7)	22.2 (2)
Chaotic Family (30)	40.0 (12)	83.3 (10)	100 (10)	0 (0)
Accommodation Problems (33)	12.1 (4)	50.0 (2)	100 (2)	0 (0)

Note. N = Total number of youth probationers. n = number of youth probationers with identified need/intervention plan. For Mandated Plan, percentages represent proportions of any plan.

### Addressing Criminogenic Needs in Supervision

After the administration of the Primary Risk Assessments and formulation of the Intervention Plan, participating probation officers tape-recorded their first “supervision” meeting with the offender. Two researchers coded 108 variables from 25 audiotapes independently of each other. The median kappa was .94 and ranged from .48 to 1.0.

Each five-minute segment of the intake audiotape was coded as to discussions around potential criminogenic needs. To be scored as present, at least two examples of statements regarding criminogenic needs had to be present. For example, it was not sufficient for the PO to ask, “How is your job going?” There had to be a follow-up comment or question. The intake interviews ranged from 5 minutes and 50 seconds to 47 minutes and 40 seconds in length. The average first supervision interview lasted 22 minutes and 34 seconds. Andrews et al. (1979), more than 20 years earlier, found an average of 35 minutes for probation officer interviews conducted in Ontario. Although the interviews were not lengthy, one must be reminded that probation officers are involved in other activities related to the client (e.g., meeting family members, calling employers, etc.). Thus, these findings reflect only one aspect of the work of probation officers.

Table 8 summarizes the findings for the first audio taped interviews with a focus on the criminogenic needs *identified by the PRA*. That is, the results shown in Table 8 are based on offenders having a need identified by the PRA and discussions around it. For youth, a need was identified if the subcomponent score was greater than or equal to one. Choosing a subcomponent score of 1 or more is a low threshold for defining a criminogenic need. For example, scoring positively on only one of nine items on the Substance Abuse subcomponent would define a criminogenic need. However, this liberal assessment of a criminogenic need maximized the number of cases for our small group of young offenders.

Table 8. Discussions of Needs Identified in the Primary Risk Assessment at First Supervision Session

Need	Adult (n = 72)		Youth (n = 31)	
	# Identified	Discussed (%)	# Identified	Discussed (%)
Accommodation	21	12 (57.1)	15	11 (73.3)
Employment	28	16 (57.1)	-	-
Substance Abuse	32	25 (78.1)	29	19 (65.5)
Attitude	34	3 (8.8)	-	-
Family/Marital	40	36 (90.0)	30	23 (76.7)
Financial	26	9 (34.6)	-	-
Emotional	17	11 (64.7)	14	2 (14.3)
Peer Problems	38	8 (21.1)	30	13 (43.3)
Academic/Vocational	7	0.0 (0.0)	31	22 (71.0)

To facilitate reading Table 8, accommodation is used as an illustration. Twenty-one adult offenders (out of 72 possible cases) had accommodation identified as problematic by the PRA. In 12 or 57.1% of these cases the probation officer and probationer discussed the difficulties surrounding poor living conditions. Likewise 15 (of 31) young offenders had accommodation problems as measured by the youth PRA. Eleven cases (73.3%) evidenced audio taped discussions around this topic. For both adults and young offenders family/marital issues were the most frequently discussed criminogenic need. This was followed by substance abuse for adults (78.1%) and accommodation for youth (73.3%).

Some criminogenic need areas received relatively little attention. For example, employment difficulties, a problem area for 28 of 72 (38.9%) of adult probationers, were discussed in 57.1% of cases. Two of the major risk factors in criminal behaviour, antisocial attitudes and criminal peers, were evident for approximately half of adult probationers. However, these need areas were infrequently discussed (8.8% and 21.1%). Similarly for youth, almost all (30 of 31) had peer problems but discussions around negative peer influence accounted for less than half of the cases (43.3%).

The amount of time an officer spends discussing a need area is important: 45 minutes discussing nine problem areas is quite different from 45 minutes spent on one or two problems. Table 9 presents information about the amount of time allocated to discussing a problem *when it is identified by the PRA for adults* (the numbers for young offenders were too low for meaningful analysis). To be included in the table there had to be a minimum of 10 cases where an identified problem was discussed. Thus, antisocial attitude (n=3), financial problems (n=9), mental ability (n=3), peer problems (n = 8) and academic difficulties (n = 7) are not presented in Table 9. The tapes were coded in five- minute segments. If an audiotape had four or more segments they were collapsed into one category.

In general, when criminogenic needs were discussed, in most cases over 15 minutes were devoted to these discussions. Employment was the exception where approximately 44% of discussions exceeded 15 minutes. Discussing the problem areas of accommodation and emotional difficulties received the lengthiest attention. Although these results suggest that probation officers spend most of their sessions discussing the criminogenic needs of offenders it must be recalled that for many offenders needs are identified but never discussed (Table 8). Table 9 shows that when a need is identified *and* the probation officer chooses to address the need then the interview tends to centre on that need.

Table 9. Percentage of Time (Tape Segments) Devoted to Discussions of Needs Identified in the Primary Risk Assessment at First Supervision Session: Adults

Need	Length of Interview (minutes)			
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16+
Accommodation (n = 12)	0.0	8.3	16.6	75.0
Employment (n = 16)	6.3	18.8	31.3	43.8
Substance Abuse (n = 25)	4.0	24.0	20.0	52.0
Family/Marital (n = 36)	0.0	19.4	19.4	61.1
Emotional (n = 11)	0.0	9.1	9.1	81.8

Note: n = cases with identified needs *and* discussed. See Table 8 for total number of adults with identified need.

Another way of viewing these first supervision sessions is to consider the variety of topics discussed. The following 14 topic areas were measured: 1) accommodations, 2) employment, 3) substance abuse, 4) antisocial attitudes, 5) family/marital, 6) financial, 7) emotions, 8) negative peer influence, 9) academics, 10) recreation, 11) spiritual, 12) health, 13) conditions of probations and 14) problems with self-regulation. Each audio taped interview was scored on a composite variable (VARIETY) as to the presence (score 1) or absence (score 0) of discussion for each topic area. Thus, an interview could be given a score ranging from zero to 14. The higher the score, the greater the range of topics discussed in the interview. Scores on the variable VARIETY ranged from 1 to 10 with an average score of 5.2. That is, the average first supervision interview included discussions of five different topic areas. As expected, the longer an interview, the more topics were discussed ( $r = .48$ ,  $n = 103$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Of course, a probation officer is not required to limit an interview to dealing with criminogenic needs. Many other issues can arise that require attention. The probationer can be faced with an unexpected crisis and have issues that interfere with addressing criminogenic needs. Other possible discussion areas were coded from the audiotapes and the results are presented in Table 10. The most salient finding from Table 10 is that discussions of the conditions of probation, not unexpectedly given that it is early in the period of supervision, are evident in almost all cases. Also, noteworthy is that two-thirds of the youth cases demonstrated discussions around social and recreational activities (less than 24% of adult cases involved such discussions). Although noncriminogenic needs were discussed, they were discussed briefly (there was only one case where a noncriminogenic need was discussed for more than 15 minutes).

Table 10. Percentage of Time Devoted to Discussions of Other Topics at First Supervision Session (n)

Topic Area		Minutes		
		Any	0-5	6+
Social/Recreation:	Adult	23.7	16.7	7.0
	Youth	67.7	54.8	12.9
Religious/Spiritual:	Adult	4.2	4.2	0.0
	Youth	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health:	Adult	25.1	15.3	9.8
	Youth	3.2	3.2	0.0
Self-Regulation:	Adult	12.6	4.2	8.4
	Youth	6.4	3.2	3.2
Probation Conditions:	Adult	91.7	26.4	65.3
	Youth	100.0	12.9	87.1

Notes: Adults, n = 72; Youth, n = 31.

### Specialized Cases

In Manitoba, offenders who have committed a domestic violence, general assault or sexual offence are administered the SRA and in Winnipeg are assigned specialized supervision. In this study, the number of these probationers was quite low. We can only speak in very general terms about the domestic violence (n = 22) and general assault cases (n = 35). There were only 13 sexual offenders leaving the numbers too small for analysis.

Domestic Violence. Twenty-two offenders were administered the Partner Assault scale. The Partner Assault scale classified 36% (n = 8) as low risk, 55% (n = 12) as medium risk and 9% as high risk (n = 2). Although the majority of these offenders were first offenders (68%), 41% caused injury to the victim.

In dealing with the male batterers, the majority accepted partial or full responsibility for their behaviour (77%). The first audio taped session was available for 18 male batterers and only 11 offenders had their 3 month and 6 month sessions recorded. Thus, we describe only the sessions at the first audiotaping.

During the first audio taped session, discussions surrounding accepting responsibility and cooperating and participating in treatment was evident in 78% of the audiotapes. However, discussions about the offender's relationship with his victim and empathy for the victim were relatively infrequent (approximately 22% of audiotapes included such discussions). Challenging violent attitudes was observed in 33% of the audiotapes and discussions around relapse prevention were evident in 50% of the cases.

Generally Assaultive Offenders. The General Assault scale was administered to 35 probationers. Only 9% were classified as high risk (n = 3) with 51% classified as medium risk (n = 18) and 40% as low risk (n = 14). The majority were first offenders (74%) but 46% caused injury to the victim and weapons were used by 37% of the general assault probationers.

In managing these offenders, the General Assault scale indicated that 17% refused to accept responsibility and 49% were rated as having low motivation for treatment. However, from the first audiotape, the coders rated most cases (67%) as cooperative with treatment. This appearance of cooperation did not last. For the 15 audiotapes submitted at six months, 73% of the audiotapes included discussions about the offender's uncooperativeness with treatment and failure to follow the probation officer's direction.

Discussing the warning signs to anger, empathy for the victim and managing anger are typical criminogenic need areas for violent offenders. Yet, most of the first audiotapes yielded little conversation around these topics (21% on empathy, 22% on relapse prevention and 7% on anger). At six months, discussions of empathy decreased to 7% and there were no discussions of anger. Discussions of strategies to prevent relapse did, however, increase and was found in 47% of the 15 six month audiotapes for the general assault probationers.

#### Problem Solving with Offenders

Problem solving involves four activities: information gathering, setting goals, generating strategies to achieve the goal and monitoring the successfulness of the strategies chosen. The value of problem solving is applicable to both adults and youth. For this reason, we report the results on our coding of problem-solving activities for both adult and young offender probationers.

Almost all of the 103 intake audiotapes (92%) involved the probation officer asking questions and gathering information presumably to help him or her better understand the problems of the probationer. Goal setting occurred in only 20% of the first audiotape, which may be understandable given that the treatment targets have already been set out in the Intervention Plan (in fact, references to monitoring plans was found in 63% of cases). Slightly less than half of the first intervention sessions (48%) had discussions about strategies for achieving goals.

At the six-month mark, analysis of the 54 audiotapes found that information gathering was still quite frequent (72%). Goal setting, however, decreased to 13% of the tapes. Generating and selecting strategies were found in 43% of the cases and monitoring remained high (72% of cases).

#### Using Community Resources

Probation officers cannot be expected to be experts in all things nor therapists for everyone. Involving agencies and others in the community to address the needs of offenders is an important aspect of case management. In this study community resources were broadly defined as any community agency or service that could support or help the client. It may be formal (e.g., the local employment agency) or informal (e.g., AA, teacher, employer). The use of community resources was coded according to six categories (see Table 11). In addition, a composite measure on the use of community resources was

constructed by combining the six categories. This measure is labelled Comprehensive Community Resources (CCR) and scores could range from 0 to 6.

It was our expectation that the use of community resources would change over time as the probation officer became more familiar with the offender's situation and intervention strategies were developed. Table 11 summarizes how community resources were used as measured in the audio taped interviews at the first session, three months and six months. The results shown in Table 11 are for both adults and young offenders. For the most part, there was very little change over time.

Table 11. Use of Community Resources over Time (Audiotape) (%)

Topic Area	Audiotape		
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Naming agency or casual reference	55.3	31.5	24.1
Names with more information	40.8	25.9	25.9
Involves social support in community	20.4	24.1	11.1
PO monitors use	50.5	53.7	46.3
PO follows up with resource	9.7	5.6	1.9
PO assists to overcome obstacles	1.9	5.6	3.7
Any of the above discussed	79.6	70.4	74.1
CCR Scale (mean score)	1.8	1.5	1.1

Note: For the first audiotape, n = 103. For the second and third audiotape, n = 54.

From the audiotapes it was apparent that probation officers expect the involvement of community resources to help manage probationers. Over the three time frames, agency services or community resources were raised in discussions in at least 70% of the cases. However, the degree to which community supports and agencies are involved in the case management process was limited. The CCR average score was between 1.1 and 1.7 reflecting the fact that discussions and activities surrounding community resources were infrequent. Most discussions involved telling the offender what resources were available (naming agencies), involving family members and friends in helping the client or asking the offender if he/she made contact with a community resource. Directly contacting an agency or community resource or assisting the probationers with accessing community supports were very infrequent.

#### Influencing Offenders in Interpersonal Relationships

Individuals can change as a result of experiences with others. Sometimes changes occur haphazardly but most of the time, other people intentionally attempt to change the behaviour of an individual. The most direct ways of influencing the behaviour of individuals is to reward desirable behaviour and punish or ignore undesirable behaviour. However, the impact of interpersonal rewards and punishment

is moderated by the relationship between the person who is trying to effect change and the individual whose behaviour is a target for change.

### Part 1. Establishing a Relationship

Interpersonal rewards and punishments are much more meaningful if the source of these rewards and punishment is valued and respected. Within the case management context, it is important for the probation officer to establish a positive, warm and respectful relationship with the client in order for the probationer to be willing to listen to what the probation officer has to say and to follow his or her advice.

The assessment of the relationship dimension was based upon two measures. First, a paper-and-pencil test (Relationship Questionnaire; RQ) was administered at the six-month point. Both the probation officer and the probationer completed the RQ independently. The problem with this measure was that it was completed for only those probationers and officers who were still involved in the study. The sample size was only 48 and likely biased due to the higher risk offenders dropping out as the project progressed. The second measure was derived from an analysis of the audiotapes. The audiotapes were coded along seven indicators of positive interpersonal skills. The seven indicators were: 1) empathy, 2) openness, 3) warmth, 4) firmness, 5) prompting and encouragement, 6) enthusiasm and 7) humour.

Scores on the RQ ranged from 77 to 107 for the Probation Officers and 70 to 123 for the probationers (n = 48). There were no statistically significant differences in the average scores for the two samples (91.6 and 98.6 respectively). A median split of RQ total scores found no reliable association between RQ scores (low/high) and risk level for the 39 adult offenders although all three high-risk adult offenders had RQ scores below the median. Three audiotape categories were correlated with the Probation Officer's RQ total score (openness, warmth and prompting and encouragement) and only one audiotape category correlated with the Probationer's RQ total score (firmness). Our intention is to conduct further analyses of the RQ to assess the scale's construct and predictive validity. Until we can conduct these analyses further comment on the paper-and-pencil measure will be reserved for another report.

For the analysis of the audiotapes, the seven relationship indicators were correlated with the overall quality rating given by the coders. Each audiotape was rated on a five-point scale (from very poor to very good) reflecting the assessor's judgement as to how well the PO handled the session. Five of the relationship indicators differentiated satisfactory or better ratings from poor or very poor ratings. For example, expressions of warmth were evident in only 9% of audiotapes rated poor or very poor but such expressions were present in 31% of tapes rated satisfactory and 64% of tapes rated good or very good. Two measures, humour and prompting and encouragement failed to differentiate poor sessions from the better quality sessions.

The assessment of relationship factors from the audiotapes is presented in Table 12. The most common indicator of a positive relationship was evident in the high frequency of prompting and encouraging behaviour from the probation officer. But, as already noted, this behaviour failed to differentiate high quality interviews from low quality interviews (probably because prompting and encouragement was evident in almost all of the audiotapes).

Table 12. Relationship Factors over Time (Audiotape) (%)

Relationship Factor	Audiotape		
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Empathy	48.5	35.2	22.2
Openness	54.4	66.7	59.3
Warmth	45.6	40.7	48.1
Firmness	45.6	53.7	24.1
Enthusiastic	27.2	27.8	44.4
Prompting and encouragement	97.1	94.4	96.3
Humour	30.1	27.8	42.6

Note: For the first audiotape, n = 103. For the second and third audiotape, n = 54.

Expressions of openness and warmth, occurring in approximately half of the interviews, were the next most frequent behaviours that were observed. It appears that these behaviours are part of an individual's interpersonal style and that they change little with time. All other indicators of relationship skills occurred less frequently and some changed with time. Empathic statements (paraphrasing, reflection of feelings, etc.) decreased over the six-month period as did firm but fair statements (i.e., setting appropriate limits for the probationer). On the other hand, enthusiasm and humour increased over time.

Also noteworthy was the lack of evidence of behaviours that could "turn off" the probationer. Coders were attentive to indicators of unfriendly, hostile behaviour from the probation officer (e.g., "Don't interrupt me, can't you see I'm talking") or evidence of boredom (e.g., "I don't find this very interesting"). From our review of 211 audiotapes over the three time frames, only seven instances of such behaviour were noted.

## Part 2. Giving Direction and Shaping Change

Behavioural interventions are one of the major characteristics of effective treatment with offenders. Behavioural interventions include the modeling of desired behaviour, opportunities to practice the behaviour, providing appropriate feedback (i.e., the systematic reinforcement of prosocial behaviours and discouragement of antisocial behaviours), teaching relapse prevention and the assignment of behavioural homework. The degree to which probation officers engaged in these practices was assessed from the audiotapes.

In Table 13 the prevalence of the major indicators of behavioural intervention is presented. Prosocial reinforcement by the probation officers was the most frequently used method of influencing change in their clients. That is, when an offender reported engaging in a prosocial activity (e.g., spent the day searching for work) the officer recognized this as desirable and expressed approval. Interestingly, probation officers were not very responsive to antisocial expressions from their clients (antisocial discouragement was noted in 18.5% to 25.9% of the audiotapes). When the probationer reported an

antisocial activity or expressed an antisocial attitude the probation officer did not note this nor challenge the behaviour or attitude.

Other aspects of behavioural intervention (i.e., prosocial modeling, practice, relapse prevention and the assignment of tasks or “homework”) occurred in a minority of the audiotapes. Once again, this behaviour did not change over time – if probation officers were not using behavioural techniques to bring about change near the beginning of supervision then they were not doing it six months later. Only discussions around relapse prevention showed an increase but only from the third to six-month period. From an organizational perspective, the areas of behavioural influence do indicate where education and training can be targeted to better position probation officers as effective change agents.

As with our analysis of the relationship factors, probation officers were found not to engage in behaviours that are harmful to efforts to induce change in the offender. Only six instances of the officer modeling antisocial behaviour (e.g., rationalizes crime) and three examples of reinforcing antisocial behaviour were found among the audiotapes.

Table 13. Directive Factors over Time (Audiotape) (%)

Factor	Audiotape		
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Prosocial Modeling	16.5	14.8	14.8
Practice	22.3	24.1	24.1
Prosocial Reinforcement	68.0	55.6	72.2
Antisocial Discouragement	20.4	25.9	18.5
Relapse Prevention	16.5	25.9	29.6
Homework Assignment	28.2	27.8	24.1

Note: For the first audiotape, n = 103. For the second and third audiotape, n = 54.

### Are Offenders Changing?

At six months, 44 adult probationers were re-administered the PRA to assess any improvements in offender risk. There was a statistically significant reduction in risk scores for adults (8.02 to 6.39,  $t = 3.42$ ,  $df = 43$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The numbers of youth available with six-month retest scores was very low. There were only 10 cases for the youth. Thus, the finding of an increase in PRA scores for youth (16.2 to 19.6,  $df = 9$ ,  $t = -2.40$ ,  $p < .05$ ) is highly suspect.

In order to maximize our sample size, both adults and youth were combined for the analysis of the test-retest scores on the paper-and-pencil tests. No statistically significant changes were found for adult and youth probationers on the Pride in Delinquency scale and the Social Support for Crime scale. However, total scores on the Aggression Questionnaire decreased from 78.4 to 69.5 ( $t = 3.29$ ,  $df = 48$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Even though few significant changes were observed from the audiotapes (Tables 11 to 13), the paper-and-pencil tests, and the risk measures, assigned levels of supervision as measured by the Risk Management Review did change for many offenders. Examining file data from the participating and non-participating probationers (n = 189), 92.1% of cases were kept on the same reporting requirements during the first three months of supervision. However, by the end of six months of supervision, 57.1% had changes in their reporting requirements. Thirty-one per cent of the probationers had decreases in supervision while twelve percent had their supervision requirements increased.

Near the end of the data collection when we undertook the file reviews, evidence of breaches and new arrests were appearing on the offenders' records. Twenty percent of probationers, both participating and non-participating, had a breach of conditions recorded on their file. Twenty-two percent had a new arrest.

#### Probation Officers' Opinions of Risk Assessment and Treatment

Engaging in a certain behaviour requires knowledge of the skills required and attitudes supportive of the behaviour. Of particular interest in this study of case management practices are the skills required to supervise offenders appropriately. However, we also gathered information on the attitudes supportive of these skills.

Sixty-three probation officers (a sample of both participating and non-participating officers) were asked to rate a number of statements concerning the PRA and offender treatment. Their responses are summarized in Table 14.

Table 14. Probation Officer Attitudes Toward Risk Assessment and Treatment (%)

Statement	Agree	Somewhat	Disagree
PRA is a valid measure of risk	63.5	23.8	12.6
PRA is helpful in supervision	53.9	30.2	15.8
PRA clarifies what treatment would help	38.1	41.3	20.6
Treatment reduces recidivism	63.5	28.6	7.9
Substance abuse treatment is effective	38.7	33.9	27.5
PO can be effective in delivering treatment	71.4	20.6	7.9
Professionals should deliver treatment	69.8	17.5	12.7

Although the vast majority of probation officers had positive orientations to the PRA and offender treatment, the attitudes can be seen as relatively "soft" especially with respect to their views of the PRA. For example, 23.8% answered only "somewhat" to the statement, "the PRA is a valid and accurate way to assess the level of risk to re-offend". The relationship of the PRA for case planning was even more ambivalent. The treatment of offenders, in general, was viewed more favourably although some scepticism may be read into the value of substance abuse treatment.

## Summary and Conclusions

The overall purpose of this study was to better understand how probation officers use risk-needs assessments to formulate their case plans and how they manage their cases. This study provides a baseline of present practice that allows us to build upon and develop a more effective approach to case management. That having been said, the study was not without methodological limitations and difficulties. We did not have the participation that we were hoping for, leaving us relatively few cases on which to base our findings. The small sample of youth cases prevented some analyses and the lack of participation by 42 probation officers raised the possibility that the results would not generalize. However, a comparison of participating and non-participating probation officers and probationer files revealed few differences. This leads us to tentatively conclude that the findings are representative of case management practice in Manitoba.

Our major findings and commentary follow.

### 1. Contacts with probationers appear limited.

Over the course of the first three months, probation officers met with their offenders an average of 4.3 times. There are few reports in the literature of how often probation officers have face-to-face contacts with their clients. Latessa (1987) found an average of 1.6 contacts per month in Ohio probation, approximately the same number that we found in Manitoba probation. This number of contacts may be appropriate for low risk offenders but we found that this was the average for all offenders in the study. For adults, high-risk offenders were seen more frequently than low and medium risk offenders but there were no differences in the average number of contacts for low and medium risk offenders. For youth, risk level was unrelated to the number of contacts.

The average length of session between the probation officer and the probationer was slightly more than 22 minutes. These two findings (number of contacts and length of session) raise the question as to whether or not probation supervision can be effective with this amount of time devoted to meeting with probationers. However, we need to keep in mind that probation officers are involved in other activities (e.g., making referrals, meeting with collaterals) and not all of their time is spent in direct contact with their clients. A broader examination of practice in probation is left for further research.

The issue that arises from these findings is the need to identify the reasons why probation officers are not spending more time with their clients. The most obvious reason may be caseloads. However, caseload size was not associated with either the number of contacts in the first three months or the length of the audio taped session. Another reason may be that probation officers are engaged in other activities related to supervision of the client such as meeting with family members and dealing with welfare agencies that place limits on the time they can spend directly with the probationer. Further research in this area is suggested.

### 2. Intervention Plans are not driven by the PRA.

When needs were identified by the PRA, they often did not find their way into the Intervention Plan. Substance abuse intervention was the most commonly noted action and this was found in approximately 80% of the cases where substance abuse was a problem. In addition, the courts mandated the majority of the actions listed in the Intervention Plans. Only with respect to employment and accommodations did it appear that the probation officer was the primary catalyst for providing a

plan of intervention. However, these plans were infrequently listed, especially for employment where more than 40% of adult probationers evidenced problems but only 10% of these cases described a way of addressing the need.

Two processes may be operating that weaken the link between assessment and the formulation of an intervention plan. First, staff may feel that they must follow the direction of the court and give priority to interventions mandated by the court. It is unclear as to how accurate the court's assessment is regarding the needs of the offender. As a result, this "mandate driven" case management restricts the probation officer's own assessment of the offender's needs and could potentially interfere with effective case management. Second, the physical separation of the assessment instrument from the Intervention Plan (they are two separate forms) hinders decisions linking the two. If these two processes account for the disjoint between assessment and the case plan then it would be fruitful to open discussions with judges regarding court-ordered conditions and perhaps consider integrating the assessment instrument with the Intervention Plan.

### 3. Identified needs are not being addressed in supervision.

Analyses of the audiotapes showed that identified criminogenic needs were not discussed in the majority of cases and that community resources were used minimally to assist the offender. These results may not be all that surprising given that actions to address offender needs are loosely formulated in the Intervention Plan. After all, if the Intervention Plan does not build on the PRA assessment of needs, then how can we expect probation officers to discuss the problems of probationers in their sessions? Based on the offender rehabilitation literature, the first step in behavioural change is to identify and address criminogenic needs. Educating and training probation officers to focus some of their discussions on the criminogenic needs of those they supervise would be an important step to improving probation services.

### 4. Probation officers can be more active.

Establishing a good relationship with the offender and then providing the offender with structured direction are key to reducing recidivism. Upon examining the audio taped interviews we found many instances of probation officers demonstrating warmth, openness, encouragement and other indicators of a positive relationship. However, evidence of good relationship skills was found in approximately half of the audiotapes. Fortunately, clearly hostile interactions with the offender were very rare. Probation officers tended to be respectful toward their clients but it was also clear that they had the skills to do even better in gaining attention and respect from the offenders by using relationship skills more frequently and consistently.

Along the structuring and directive dimension of interpersonal influence we found, as with relationship skills, that probation officers could do more. They were quite good in praising and rewarding offenders when they said something prosocial but missed opportunities to alter antisocial expressions through appropriate discouragement. Other skills (e.g., prosocial modeling, practice) that could be very effective in changing offender behaviour were evident in a minority of audio taped interviews.

The general picture that emerged from the audio taped interviews was that probation officers were holding back from more active and direct efforts to change the behaviour of the probationers. The

responsibility to bring about change rested heavily on the offender. Probation officers may tell their probationers where they could go to receive assistance in the community and may ask the offenders if they followed through with a community agency. However, we found very few examples of an officer contacting the agency directly to ask how the offender was doing and if he/she could be of any help. We found that probation officers could be very friendly and warm and also provide good advice and direction but these behaviours were not consistently manifested in the taped interviews. Although education and training are important if the situation is to improve, examination of organizational structures and policies (e.g., kinds of activities expected from probation officers, the role of court mandated treatment in the formulation of case plans) may also be needed.

#### 5. Positive changes in the offenders were ambivalent.

Interpreting changes over the six-month monitoring period requires caution. Almost half of all cases that began the study were lost by the six-month mark. The only positive change noted during the six months was a decrease in PRA risk scores for adults. For youth, risk scores actually increased but this finding is likely unreliable given the small sample size. No significant changes were observed from the audiotapes and, from the research questionnaires, only the total score on the Aggression Questionnaire showed a decrease. Finally, despite the lack of significant behavioural and test evidence, 31% of probationers were re-assigned to lower levels of supervision six months after supervision. It is unclear from the data available to us on what basis staff made the decision to decrease supervision levels for these probationers. Further study may be warranted to identify the factors that probation officers consider when altering supervision levels.

#### *A Closing Statement*

The probation officers who participated in this project and the managers who gave their support to the study should be commended for their courage to place themselves under such scrutiny. Perhaps, it was their belief that only by open and frank examination can probation services improve. At this point, we have described the starting line for a race to provide better supervision to offenders. In that race, it is clear that training and changes in “the way we do business” are required. Probation officers can learn to do more and to do it better. Managers can alter policies and procedures and seek the resources probation officers need to be more effective. The beneficiaries of such an effort will be the staff, the offenders and the community.



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